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(b)(1)1.7(e)



The Recovery of Bowe Bergdahl



(b)(1)1.4(a), (b)(2), (b)(3) (10 U.S.C. § 130b), (b)(6)

February 2015

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(U) On the Cover

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he photograph is unclassified.



history • lessons learned • solutions

(U) The Center for Counterterrorism Studies produced this monograph with the collaboration of subject matter experts resident throughout the Command. Our goal is to accurately report on operations, exercises and key events to gain insights, lessons learned and best practices in order to help continually improve the Command's processes and mission execution.

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(U) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(U) It was a challenge to condense lessons from a service member's ordeal that spanned almost five years. This special report makes no attempt to be the definitive document for that event. Ours is an abridged version of the circumstances of his departure from his post and the external recovery efforts; with a focus on his recovery and subsequent reintegration.

~~(S)~~ On 30 June 2009, the leaders of B Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment discovered that one of their own, who deployed with them from Fort Richardson, Alaska, was now missing from Observation Post Mest in the Paktika Province of Afghanistan.

~~(S)~~ The initial Coalition efforts failed to locate Private First Class Bowe Bergdahl. In a matter of days it became clear that he was captured (b)(1)1.4(c)

(b)(1)1.4(c) From this date through 2011, U.S. Central Command served as the lead for the efforts to find and recover Bergdahl. (b)(1)1.4(a)

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(b)(1)1.4(a) then shifted efforts to successfully recover Bergdahl from his Haqqani captors on 31 May 2014. The transfer of Bergdahl from Haqqani to U.S. custody was completed in seconds

(b)(1)1.4(a)

(U) PREFACE

(b)(1)1.4(a) The purpose of this case study is to highlight the significant actions that (b)(1)1.4(a) (b)(1)1.4(a) undertook in support of the U.S. Central Command efforts to find, fix and recover Bowe Bergdahl (b)(1)1.7(e). In highlighting these actions, the study also captures observations and insights from many of those involved.

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~~(S)~~ This study addresses the critical driving functions (b)(1)1.4(a)

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(b)(1)1.4(a) recovery are highlighted and provide most of the lessons learned and observations as this aspect of the operation was the most unique due to his extensive time in captivity.

~~(S)~~ The scope of this study includes neither Bergdahl's departure from his duty post nor the Taliban prisoner exchange (b)(1)1.7(e)

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(U) CHRONOLOGY

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(U) Setting the Scene (2009 – 2012)

~~(S)~~ On the morning of 30 June 2009, the chain-of-command of B Company, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment (25th Infantry Division) reported that Private First Class Bowe Bergdahl was missing from Observation Post (OP) Mest in Paktika Province. Immediately upon their DUSTWUN (Duty Status – Whereabouts Unknown) report, Coalition Forces from the region, to include (b)(1)1.7(e) focused their efforts on finding Bergdahl

(b)(1)1.4(a), (b)(1)1.4(c)

(b)(1)1.4(a), (b)(1)1.4(c) During this initial stage, there was a collaborative effort across the battlespace to locate Bergdahl

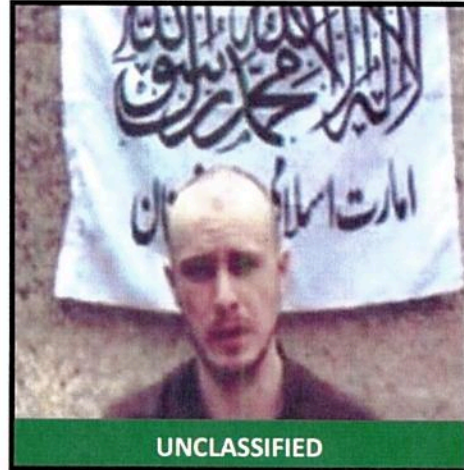
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(U) Figure 3 - Bergdahl Prior to Deployment

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(b)(1)1.4(a), (b)(1)1.4(c)



(U) Figure 4 - September 2011 Proof-of-Life Video

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(b)(1)1.4(a), (b)(1)1.4(c)

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The transfer was made very quickly with no issues, and the recovery team called "Jackpot" on 31 May 2014 at 1410Z. From the aircraft arrival to departure from the landing zone, only 61 seconds elapsed.

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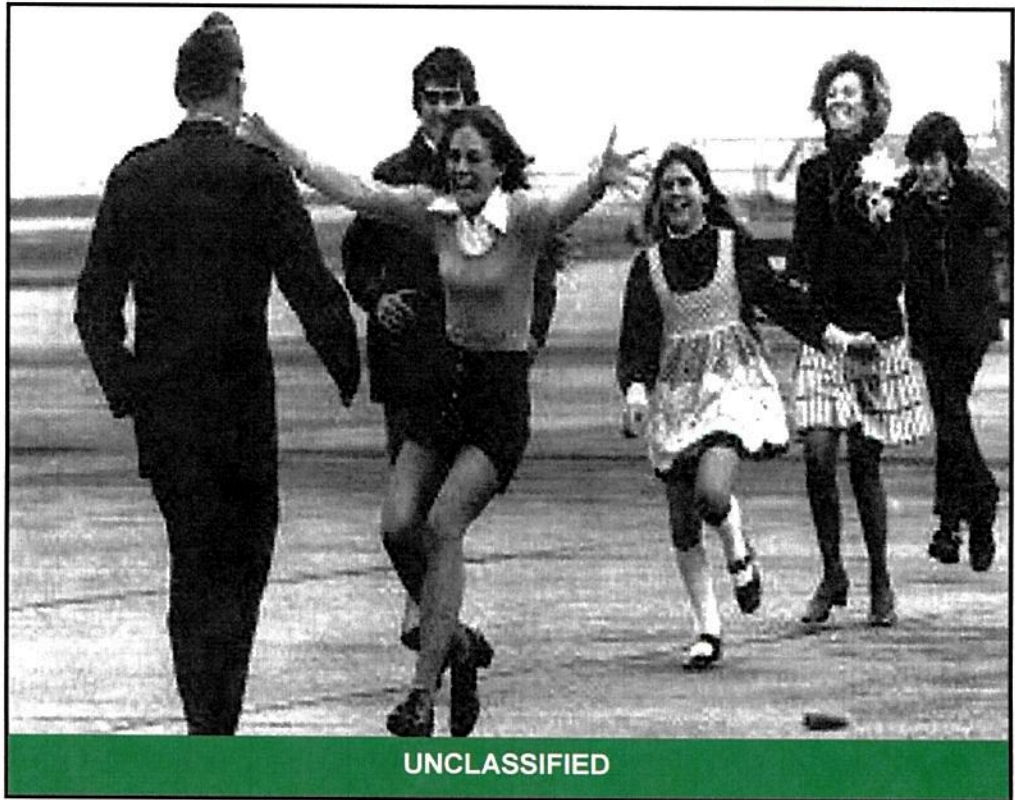
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(U) Put into Perspective

(U) On 15 April 1972, the U.S. Air Force published its reintegration plan, Operation EGRESS RECAP, for the expected release of over 600 prisoners of war from North Vietnam. In accordance with the plan, affected installation commanders placed a colonel in charge of all reintegration requirements. Of note, the U.S. Air Force only provided reintegration training for the officers in charge of Operation EGRESS RECAP responsibilities at the various bases. The reintegration focused more on the administrative requirements of ensuring the returnees were back in the "system." The reintegration plan addressed intelligence debriefings with the intent of identifying prisoners who were unaccounted for. The quality of the debriefings, especially those not related to the status of prisoners still considered missing, was questionable at best due to a

lack of properly trained debriefers. The desire to reunite the returnees with families also influenced the speed of the reintegration unless there was an obvious medical or psychological issue, with the latter being more difficult to assess much of the time. The high numbers of returnees, coupled with the unprepared reintegration teams, resulted in a failure to maximize the gain of SERE lessons learned and intelligence. In the case of (b)(1)1.7(e)



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(U) Figure 8 - Vietnam War Prisoner Reuniting with Family

(b)(1)1.7(e) a sole returnee, the reintegration teams garnered SERE lessons learned and intelligence while ensuring his wellbeing.

(U) Observations

(U) The following ten observations primarily address the reintegration process and provide salient lessons learned for future recovery operations.

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(U) Abbreviations and Acronyms

AO	Area of Operation	JTT-A	Joint Targeting Force - Afghanistan
AOR	Area of Responsibility	KLE	Key Leader Engagement
BAF	Bagram Airfield	LRMC	Landstuhl Regional Medical Center
CAPOC	Controlled Access Principal Only Communication	mIRC	Mardem-Bey Internet Relay Chat
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
CJOA	Combined Joint Operations Area	NAI	Named Area of Interest
CONOP	Concept of the Operation	NGA	National Geospatial Agency
CONUS	Continental United States	NIPF	National Intelligence Priority Framework
CSG	Counterterrorism Small Group	NSA	National Security Agency
CT	Counterterrorism	NSS	National Security Staff
CTC-PAD	Counterterrorism Center - Pakistan/Afghanistan Division	PIR	Priority Intelligence Report
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency	PR	Personnel Recovery
DOS	Department of State	RC	Regional Command
DUSTWUN	Duty Status - Whereabouts Unknown	RTC	Reintegration Team Chief
ETF	Expeditionary Task Force	SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
HUMINT	Human Intelligence	TB	Taliban
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas	USCENTCOM	United States Central Command
FMV	Full Motion Video	USEUCOM	United States European Command
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order	USFOR-A	United States Forces - Afghanistan
GOP	Government of Pakistan	USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force		
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance		
JHT	Joint Hostage Team		
JOC	Joint Operations Center		

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